

**BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**&**  
**LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

There was a SPECIAL meeting of the above referenced subcommittees held on Tuesday, September 23, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilor Hypolite, Deputy Mayor Gamble and Councilor Merritt, DeLorenzo, Rivers, Neuwirth, Washington, Mayor Schulman

Also present were: William Hogan, Director of Finance, Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, Thom Hooper, Director of Planning, Walter Topliff, Town Assessor and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Guests: Paul Butler, 25 Jerome Avenue, LLC Principal, Bob Weiner, Consultant, Attorney Dwight Merriam, Robinson & Cole

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Discussion regarding the Proposed Downtown Residential Project (400 Apartment Units located on Jerome Avenue)**

Councilor Hypolite thanked the developers of this project on behalf of the Town of Bloomfield. He stated that he was very excited for this foundation and potential success for the community as a whole.

Mr. Thom Hooper gave a brief overview of the overall project. The master conceptual plans were approved by the Town Plan & Zoning Commission (TPZ) on July 24, 2014. The developer is requesting a 7 year abatement for the project as well as agree to minority set aside for construction.

Mr. Walter Topliff, Town Assessor gave a brief overview of the finances in phases of the project. The town net abatement would be approximately \$3,142,742.

Deputy Mayor Gamble stated that there would be no loss to the town. The town would still collect approximately \$70,000 per year in real estate taxes on the existing land as well as a potential to collect \$600,000 - \$750,000 in building permit fees.

Councilor Hypolite inquired about the net revenue from permits and any other revenues or expenditures. The applicant was denied that Sidewalk Grant from the State, so they will include that as well into their project costs. It was noted that additional revenues may be attainable through personal property taxes for various heavy equipment in town onsite for construction.

Councilor Merritt does not agree that this developer should be granted an abatement. He referenced an existing policy regarding the issuance of abatements in town. Historically, abatements were used in the past as a competitive tool against other communities to attract businesses. He also expressed concerns regarding the size of the structure being too large. Councilor Merritt inquired about cost associated to the town for utility lines and tree removal.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about Phase I of the project and the average cost to build one unit. It was noted that construction cost one unit in Phase I would be approximately \$110,000.

Mr. Paul Butler, developer, 25 Jerome Avenue, LLC asked what does the town want to do?

Mr. Bob Weiner, consultant on this project outlined the benefits and the need for an abatement. This project has been reviewed and approved by town staff and has had an independent assessment by Goman & York, Economic Development consultants. The benefits of the project would provide the following:

- Revitalization of the town center
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Councilor Hypolite expressed issues with  
He also asked for a written report to be submitted to Council from Goman & York.

Deputy Mayor Gamble stated that apartment buildings are more feasible than single family homes and make more tax sense. She also referenced the Plan of Conservation & Development and the recommendations to sustain a walkable community.

### Minority Set-Aside

Councilor Washington inquired about the detailed plans for the minority set aside.

Councilor Rivers stated that this project will have little to no effect on the school population. However, it will be attractive to the town and those individuals out of town may be willing to explore.

Councilor Hypolite expressed concerns about how much is being allocated to the contractors versus direct hires.

Mr. Paul Butler met with Capitol Workforce Partners – Jobs Funnel Program. They recommended an outside auditor firm to monitor minority workforce participation.

Mayor Schulman expanded on obtaining minority contractors and participation. He is 100% favorable of this project.

Councilor Neuwirth is also in favor of the project as it has been presented from investors and expertise of town staff.

Deputy Mayor Gamble inquired about what defines a minority and the realistic goal of attaining 20%. She elaborated about the function and expertise of the Capitol Workforce Partners.

Mr. Philip Schenck, Jr., Town Manager stated that Bloomfield has the highest unemployment rate of 8.4% in the Greater Hartford region. He suggested to the developer to look at companies and individuals to hire within town as much as possible.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about detailed information for subcontractor, wages and duties. He also requested written documentation from the town economic development consultants, Capitol Workforce Partners to assure minority partnership and other benefits in terms of additional charges.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. **Diana Aniello, 28 Gabb Road** complained about the lack of communication to town residents about the project.
2. **Joe DiBitta, 7 Cobblestone Road** stated that this development will change the character of the town center significantly.

Attorney Dwight Merriam presented a